Railway has filed contempt petition in Rajasthan High Court to prevent the unauthorised mining.

Stability of rail routes

1453. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Konkan Railway Corporation has admitted for the first time that its 200-km. rail route falls under an instability zone;

(b) whether with repeated incidents the running of bullet train to ply on the tracks has proved unsafe; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to make the rail journey safe on these vulnerable tracks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Konkan Railway have proposed running one train at a maximum speed of 150 kmph from Madgaon to Roha and trial run were conducted from 26th to 29th December, 2002. However, before permitting this train, the infrastructure arrangement for ensuring smooth Railway journey at such speed will also be needed.

(c) In order to make Railway journey safe during monsoon season, immediate measures such as patrolling by locomotives in advance of the passenger trains and speed restriction of 40 kmph, have been taken in addition to patrolling of vulnerable spots. Provision of audiovisual pre-warning alarm devices in all deep cuttings, more than 12 metre in depth, is under consideration. One round of special loose scaling on massive scale has also been taken up in rock cuttings.

STD booths to educated unemployed

1454. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to accord priority to the educated unemployed youths while making allotments for STD booths,

stalls and travel agencies etc. on railway stations in view of the growing unemployment in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) State-wise number of beneficiaries during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) and (b) Detailed guidelines for allotment of STD/ISD/PCO/FAX/Internet Booths at Railway stations covering various categories of persons such as Educated Unemployed Youths, Physically Handicapped and Ladies have been issued. Policy guidelines have also been issued for allotment of Bookstalls to educated unemployed youths and for allotment of catering stalls to physically handicapped and war widows. For granting licence to Rail Travellers' Service Agents and Rail Tourist Agents, no priority is accorded to educated unemployed youths.

(c) No such statistics are maintained.

Justification of new projects of Railways

1455. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in terms of Rules 201 and 204 of Railway Financial Code (Vol. No. I) is it necessary that a new project should be financially justified and that the rate of return (RCR) should not be less than 10% of the estimated cost of the project;

(b) if so, why the Railway Board sanctioned the gauge conversion work on Yelahanka-Chikballapur-Bangarpet section which resulted in an infructuous expenditure of more than Rs. 60.00 crores after the project was abandoned midway as commercially unviable; and

(c) what are the reasons for the railways not providing funds for bonifide and commercially viable projects like Hassan-Mangalore broad gauge conversion for the last 10 years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) The projects on Indian Railways,